



# County of Los Angeles CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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August 30, 2007

To: Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, Chairman  
Supervisor Gloria Molina  
Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke  
Supervisor Don Knabe  
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

From: William T Fujioka  
Chief Executive Officer

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## REPORT ON AMENDMENT TO ITEM 18: DISTRIBUTION OF INFORMATION ON THE LOS ANGELES CENTRALIZED ELIGIBILITY LIST THROUGH COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENTS

On July 17, 2007, your Board approved a motion by Supervisor Don Knabe to amend Item 18, and directed the Office of Child Care (OCC), within the Service Integration Branch of the Chief Executive Office, to work with representatives of Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS), Department of Public Social Services (DPSS), Probation Department, Department of Public Health (DPH), Chief Information Office (CIO), and the First 5 LA Commission to ensure distribution of information on the Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List (LACEL) to communities throughout Los Angeles County. The motion required OCC to report back in 45 days. The following is the report on activities and progress made in complying with that motion.

### Los Angeles Centralized Eligibility List

The LACEL is a Countywide database of families seeking assistance in paying for child care and development services. LACEL streamlines the application process for subsidized child care by requiring a single application for all children in a family. In addition, LACEL calculates the ranking of applicants, ensuring that the lowest income families have the first opportunity for enrollment when funding is available and openings occur. This assists child development programs in identifying and processing eligible families. Originally intended to assist families seeking subsidized child care and development services through the California Department of Education/Child Development Division, LACEL also serves Head Start and Los Angeles Universal Preschool (LAUP) programs in identifying eligible families.

Currently there are more than 41,000 children on the LACEL and over 150 agencies entering new family records and using LACEL to search for and enroll children. LACEL staff have developed a Quality Assurance Plan (QAP), which includes strategies for managing records to ensure the accuracy and timeliness of family and children information. While the implementation of the QAP activities results in the elimination of hundreds of old or inaccurate records each month, the Community Outreach Plan (COP) promotes information about LACEL to communities or groups with families with young children. This results in the addition of hundreds of new records each month. Your Board motion is related to expanding the COP.

### **Progress to Date**

First 5 LA has been contacted and efforts are underway to determine the most effective strategies to distribute information on LACEL through First 5 LA initiatives and other Commission projects. In addition, face to face meetings or phone consultations were conducted with all five County departments. The following section summarizes those efforts.

- Chief Information Office

The OCC and CIO staff have discussed what role, if any, CIO can play in distributing information to potentially eligible families. It appears that CIO is better suited to assisting OCC in planning for, and designing enhancements to the LACEL system. An enhancement that has been discussed is extending access to the LACEL system directly to parents, so they can self-register. The CIO will assist OCC in determining how to make the LACEL accessible to the public, while preserving the integrity and confidentiality of the data.

- Department of Children and Family Services

The OCC staff met directly with the manager of the Child Care Assistance Program at DCFS and conducted an orientation on LACEL for over 30 staff. While the Child Care Assistance Program is able to assist nearly all families referred to them by the Children's Services Workers (CSW), there are families that do not have child care included in their case plans, but still have a need for the service. In order to make those families aware of the option to use LACEL, CSWs need to be informed on how these families can access LACEL. Contact was established with the Education and Mentoring Unit of DCFS. Through this program, the LACEL Outreach Coordinator has begun scheduling presentations to CSWs at each DCFS office. These presentations take place during regular staff training sessions. Brochures in various languages are being distributed, as well as LACEL fact sheets that each CSW can use as a reference. To date, six presentations have been scheduled. The LACEL Outreach Coordinator will schedule presentations at all DCFS offices.

- Probation Department

The OCC staff made contact with the manager in the Communications and Community Relations section of the Probation Department. Given the size of the client population (over 60,000 adults and 40,000 juveniles), staff (3,000 probation officers) and the difficulty of identifying clients who have children under 13 years of age, it was agreed that information on

LACEL would be included as a resource in training materials provided to each probation officer. Because all probation officers are required to participate in 40 hours of training annually, this was determined to be the most efficient mechanism to reach all probation officers, and through them, their clients' families.

In addition, the LACEL Outreach Coordinator will present at a meeting to the Probation Directors to help increase the awareness of LACEL as a resource. OCC staff will continue working with Probation staff to determine if there are sub-populations that are more likely to need subsidized child care, and the best way to establish ongoing contact with those populations.

- Department of Public Social Services

On August 6, 2007, OCC staff met with DPSS/GAIN and CalWORKs program management staff. The meeting was organized by the head of the Child Care Program Section. The majority of CalWORKs/GAIN participants are able to access child care. As a result, this discussion revolved around populations that would not be able to access CalWORKs child care such as:

- Food Stamps or Medi-Cal only households
- Households that have reached the five year limit for TANF support
- Child only cases
  - Non-needy caretakers
  - Undocumented parents
- Diversion clients
- Families denied (ineligible) due to excess income

It was determined that the number of diversion clients is very small; not an effective target for LACEL information. OCC has requested information to determine the feasibility and costs associated with outreaching to the other listed populations. Critical to the determination of a distribution plan is the number of families with children up to age 12 who: 1) receive food stamps; 2) are Medi-Cal only recipients; 3) have been determined to be ineligible for CalWORKs; and/or 4) are child only cases. Among the strategies being considered are including LACEL information in recertification materials for some of the above client populations or a one-time mailing with LACEL brochures or flyers.

In addition, it appears that the most effective way to identify and contact families who are timing out of CalWORKs is through the GAIN workers assigned to these post-time limited participants. OCC and GAIN division staff are planning a meeting with GAIN workers and supervisors who provide information and resources for the families who are timing out of CALWORKs or GAIN. There are approximately 20 such staff who would receive the training and the LACEL materials to use in their work with these particular clients.

- Department of Public Health

The OCC staff met with management staff at DPH, Children's Medical Services Section. This program was determined to be a good contact within DPH since its services were targeted primarily to low-income children and their families. DPH staff explained that there were several programs providing services to low-income children and their families, many of whom may be eligible for subsidized child care. Connected to each program are staff or contractors who would be the conduits for any information on LACEL. For example, nursing staff within California Children's Services and the California Health and Disability Prevention Program could take information to their client families and agencies. The distribution strategy at this point is to connect with staff and/or contractors through each of the particular programs offered through DPH including: Maternal, Child, and Adolescent Health; California Children's Services; California Health and Disability Prevention Program; Children's Health Outreach Initiative; and Children's Medical Services. The LACEL Outreach Coordinator will schedule presentations, through DPH with nursing and other staff, and with community contractors. The first presentation was conducted on August 2, 2007.

During the presentations scheduled through DPH, LACEL fact sheets and brochures (in multiple languages) will be distributed. The Outreach Coordinator will be developing a database of contacts from these presentations for follow-up related to updated materials.

### **Conclusion**

With your Board's support, a number of County departments are becoming effective partners in helping low-income families access subsidized child care services through LACEL. OCC will work to expand these relationships and make information on subsidized child care services readily available to clients using a variety of County services. In addition, LACEL is being integrated into the next phase of LACountyHelps.org, expected to be operational in the Fall of 2007. LACountyHelps.org is the easy-to-use Web site that provides information, including eligibility criteria, on a variety of County administered services.

WTF:BY  
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c: Executive Office, Board of Supervisors